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ABSTRACT

Cities encompass a variety of environments and children interact with these environments in different ways with different impacts resulting. Such factors as socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, and recency of in-migration all affect the nature and extent of environmental impact on individuals. Inequalities in housing, economic and educational opportunities, availability of amenities, and access to civic and cultural resources also have their impact. Because of these characteristics, poverty has become a central element of the urban crisis and, because children of the poor are found in increasing numbers in the central city, the impact of the urban environment is most severe on that population. Children from low-income housing tend to have poorer physical and mental health and have lower school achievement than their counterparts from more affluent families and more appropriate housing. The emotional and psychological climate created in slum areas impact quite negatively on children. In addition, children from inner city areas seem severely hampered in their schooling by a complex of conditions at home, in the neighborhood, and in the classroom. Compensatory education has tried to create conditions which help the disadvantaged overcome these conditions but might be more effective if it became developmental as well as remedial. (Author/EB)

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SOME POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE CITY ON CHILDREN

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SOME POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF THE CITY ON CHILDREN

by *A. Harry Passow*

1. Urban Children in an Urban Environment

Anthropologist Margaret Mead once observed: "It's a good thing to think about 'the child', if you remember that 'The Child' doesn't exist. Only children exist; children in a particular context; children who are different from each other; children with different senses."[1] Similarly, while one can think about "the city", it must be kept in mind that cities differ in many ways and have many unique aspects, although they have many common elements as well.

All cities have in common a built urban environment which impacts on those persons who reside in, grow up in, work in, transact business in, and visit them. All cities have in common population density. All have a tempo of life and a variety of life styles which differ drastically from what is found in rural and suburban settings. Cities are crowded and busy places. They have far too much of some things-- such as people, pollution, and poverty, for example. They have far too little of other things-- such as resources for dealing with urban problems, space and natural amenities, for instance. All cities have crowded central cores or inner-city areas where a variety of social, economic, physical, and psychological problems and pathologies tend to be concentrated.

Cities encompass slums and ghettos, luxury housing, commercial and industrial centers, parks and recreation areas, and cultural resources. Cities encompass a variety of environments and children interact with these environments in different ways with different impacts resulting. Such factors as socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, and recency of in-migration (as well as place of origin), all affect the nature of and the extent of environmental impact on individuals. These factors affect accessibility to various environments and resources as well. For example, while physical mobility is considered one of the characteristics of cities with their developed transportation systems, children from slum areas may rarely venture outside the confines of their immediate neighborhoods. And, while cities build and maintain museums, zoos, parks, and recreation areas, it is the middle-class

child who is more likely to use these resources than is the child of poverty. On the other hand, studies indicate that children from low-income homes have equal access to television and radio and use these media more intensively than their middle-class counterparts. Greenberg et al. suggest that low-income children tend to be more dependent on the mass media, especially television, "as a means of contact with and information about the world outside [their] immediate grasp."[2]

Edmund Gordon has described urban areas as follows:

> [They are] characterized by large numbers of people, by high densities, by great diversity and heterogeneity of characteristics and concerns of people, by high degree of mobility, a relatively high incidence of anonymity, by concentration of human material resources, by ease of communication and geographic mobility, and by coexistence of fluidity and rigidity in institutional and personal behavior.

In Gordon's view, these characteristics-- and there are more, of course-- "confront us with challenge and opportunity."[3]

2. The Shape and Shaping of Urban Environments

For some time now, the pattern of migration has been from the farms and rural areas to the cities where individuals seek better jobs and better lives for themselves and their families. The development of suburbs with their perceived superior amenities has resulted in movement of families from the cities but this exodus has consisted predominantly of middle-class or working-class families leaving increasing concentrations of low-income, poor, and minority groups in the center cities. This movement-- from rural areas to cities and from cities to suburbs-- has had a profound effect on the cities. Sometimes by choice, but more often because of discriminatory practices, socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial neighborhoods and ghettos develop. Cities are marked by the existence of neighborhoods consisting of various groupings. In some instances, such neighborhoods have been more or less assimilated into the basic fabric of the city. More often, the ethnic and racial groups continue and maintain their unique cultures, distinctive traditions, and even their own languages.

Cities are characterized by gross inequalities in housing, economic and educational opportunities, availability of amenities, and access to civic and cultural resources. Population densities vary considerably. The poor and less educated (the correlation is usually quite high) tend to live in the most crowded, the most desnely populated areas of the city where one finds, as Ashmore and McConahay put it: "the

most crime and delinquency, the poorest health care, and the greatest degree of social disorganization (as defined by middle-class social scientists)."[4] Strong relationships have been found between density measures and measures of health and social disorganization.[5]

Anthrpologist Alexander Mitscherlich has observed that one "cannot get over the fact that the commercially-oriented planning of our cities is clearly aimed at one age group only-- working adults-- and even then inadequately enough. How a child is to become a working adult seems to be a negligible factor. The world of the child is a sphere of the socially weak, and is ruthlessly manipulated."[6] In general, our cities seem to be designed primarily with the needs of the middle-class motorist in mind with the rest of the population having to manage as best it can.

American cities currently face a variety of problems involving all aspects of urbanicity. Among the dilemmas faced is the fact that fewer tax dollars are available as middle-income taxpayers move out and property values, business, and commerce decline; more tax dollars are needed for essential public services and facilities and for meeting the basic needs of low-income groups; increasing costs of goods and services result in dwindling tax dollars buying less; and dissatisfaction with services provided increases as needs, expectations and relative standrads of living increase.[7]

Problems of air and noise pollution, inadequate and substandard housing, deteriorating transportation systems, disintegrating infrastructures, inadequate health services, crime and vandalism-- all grow and become ever more critical. Above all, poverty has become a very central element in the urban crisis and, because children of the poor are found in ever increasing numbers in the central cities, the impact of the urban environment is most severe on that population.

A report for Urban America, Inc., asserts that city life provides a number of amenities not found in non-urban settings, such as: (1) the possibility of anonymity and selective disclosure; (2) mobility for play, work, and adventure; (3) specialty facilities that permit a plurality of tastes, interests, and pursuits; (4) functional relationships rather than propinquity relationships; and (5) the opportunity and danger of choice.[8] These amenities are available to both the middle-class urban dweller and the urban poor to different degrees. The report observes that urban schools-- a primary city institution which affects almost all children-- tends to violate almost every one of these amenities of city life and quite predictably generate serious problems for its child population.

3. Urban Environments and the Urban Poor.

Families, neighborhoods, and schools are the basic units in which children are raised, educated, and socialized. It is these environments which affect children and their development most immediately and significantly. In the case of the poor and their children, many aspects of such environments are created by others and the poor have little control over decisions which are made for them in many aspects of their lives. Ward has argued:

> [The] poor of inner-city....have been victims of the decisions of others whose values do not include a consideration of the psychic damage they inflict. When the rich live in cities, they have that space that enables their children to choose their personal balance between indoors and outdoors, and they have the network of contacts, the chequebooks, and the know-how with which to enrich the environmental experience of their children.[9]

To a large extent, the element of freedom of choice in housing and in neighborhood has largely disappeared for the urban poor. Design of low-income housing (i.e. project housing or council estates) is based primarily on income with such factors as family patterns, size, life styles, life cycles, values and indigenous culture largely ignored. Attention to such factors would immediately suggest alternate designs for low-income housing.

Lower-class and ghetto neighborhoods are often organized along family and kinship lines, groupings which provide social support and cultural maintenance as well as direct aid during emergencies and in times of need. This pattern of extended family and kinship ties and the mutual support which often emerges affects the development of children who have a variety of role models available to them, greater than that found in the nuclear, more isolated family.

The nature of the family and the interrelationships within and among families in low-income and poverty areas contributes to the creation of environments which affect the development of children in many ways.

There is growing evidence which indicates that the circumstances of child-rearing in slums produces experiences that hamper the development of children in ways which damage almost every human trait of social importance. Mothers of slum children are far less likely than those of their middle-class counterparts to be properly nourished and in good health at the time of conception. As a consequence,

> Not only is the incidence of good prenatal and perinatal complications such as prematurity, bleeding, and toxema considerably higher in mothers from low socioeconomic

> status, but the fatigue, uncertainty, and unesthetic quality of life in slum circumstances inevitably leaves parents and particularly mothers with little of what it takes to cherish and protect their infant children for prolonged periods.[10]

Child rearing practices of the poor affects the physical and mental health of the children as well as their cognitive development and language acquisition. Children from low-income housing tend to have poorer physical and mental health and lower school achievement than their counterparts from more affluent families and more adequate housing. The emotional and psychological climate created in slum areas impact quite negatively on children.

Ward points out that children from backgrounds of poverty and deprivation become more and more isolated from the world of the successful and self-confident: "The organisation of retail distribution, the organisation of work, the commercialisation of leisure, and the changed scale of the modern city, all demand a higher level of competence and know-how than was required of the poor city dweller of the past. You have to be clever to cope."[11] In Ward's view, the child who grows up in poverty today "is caught in a cage in which there is not even the illusion of freedom of action to change his situation, except of course in activities outside the law. Self-confidence and purposeful self-respect drain away from these children as they grow up because there is no way which makes sense to them, of becoming involved, except in a predatory way, in their own city."[12]

In a sense, Oscar Lewis's concept of the "culture of poverty" is supported by Ward. Lewis has suggested that the culture of poverty is basically an adaptation to the bare fact of being poor and is a culture added to other cultural characteristics. In Lewis's view, the culture of poverty is

> self-perpetuating because children reared in these circumstances adopt the basic values, attitudes, and behaviors of their subculture by the time they reach the age of seven or eight. These values, attitudes,and behaviors place psychological limitations upon these youngsters' abilities to take advantage of most opportunities for escaping the culture of poverty and changing their lives.[13]

Thus, in Lewis's view, it is the immediate environment which has significant impact in terms of socializing children into a culture of poverty. This view has been criticised by a number of social planners not because there is any question about environmental impact on children, but rather because of logical inconsistencies in the concept, the absence of empirical data to support it, and the deleterious implications for social action which would aim at alleviating poverty.[14]

4. Urban Settings and the Development of Children.

Grude has studied the impact on children of the transition from a predominantly rural economy to the modern industrialization of the urban setting. He noted:

> In contrast to the rural child, the urban child experiences restricted movement, reduced contacts with adults, separation from one or both parents during the work day, consumption of goods while seldom observing their production, less emphasis on muscular development, a more strained emotional atmosphere in which individual emotions are concentrated on fewer people, and increased emphasis on mental abilities.[15]

Studying the effects of urbanization on the behavior of children, Whiting observed that settings have a profound influence on children's behavior. Three relevant aspects of setting include: (1) the space and contents of the space, (2) the cast of characters present on the set, and (3) the activities which occur on the set involving the cast of characters. Whiting argues that urban living affects children's behavior by confining them to sets where they are unable to participate in subsistence activities bringing them instead "in contact with specialists who furnish the goods and services ordinarily acquired self-reliantly by each family in country settings." Further, activities in urban settings "decrease a child's contact with altruistic and self-reliant models and reduce his opportunity to learn and to practice responsible and helpful behavior."[16]

Urban life is more likely to push children into passivity. As Grude points out:

> [Urban children] remain as onlookers, outside shop windows and in the streets. The form part of an audience in movie theaters, circus and stadiums, in watching TV and reading comics. They may imitate father at his desk or behind the wheel of a car, mother vacuum cleaning, shopping or dressing for office. But activity is quite limited. They are expected to keep quiet at school, to sit at their desk, to learn a lesson-- very much without evident, palpable, concrete results.[17]

The child's self-image and his identity are established and validated in interaction with other persons, including other children as well as adults. The urban child's self-concept is influenced to a great extent by his environment, both personal and physical. The family and the neighborhood are the places where children's perceptions of self are molded, where their sense of self-value is determined, and where the belief in fate control-- the ability to determine one's own future destiny-- is nurtured. Studies indicate

that the self-concepts of children of the poor and those from various racial and ethnic minorities tends to be lower and more negative than those of more advantaged children. What children believe about themselves-- as individuals and as members of a group-- affects all aspects of their behavior as they mature. Children who look about them and see the manifestations of life in slums-- poor housing, unemployment, health problems, poor scholastic achievement, crime and violence, sense of inadequacy, etc.-- are not likely to establish a very strong sense of fate control or a positive self-image. In very few aspects of the child's development is the impact of the environment so clear and direct as in the establishment of his self-worth and sense of fate control.

Writing about the world of the Black ghetto children, their environment, fears, frustrations and latent tendencies, psychiatrist Robert Coles observed that:

> most ghetto children receive good upbringing morally and, although always on the defensive psychologically, they can be reached during these years. It is only when they reach 13 or 14 that they see the things they cannot have, the jobs they cannot get, and the world that does not want them, then these frustrations take a concrete form in violence.[18]

In Coles's view and that of many others, increasing the self-esteem of disadvantaged children from the slums will require very drastic socioeconomic, legal, political, and educational changes affecting all aspects of life in ghetto areas. Jackson argues that only a clinical approach which attends to such factors as unemployment, housing, education, and segregation which has lead to antisocial behavior will help resolve the problems of the ghetto.

Some analysts, such as Frank Riessman, have argued that children from disadvantaged areas have developed some basic skills and attitudes which enable them to survive in the hard setting of the ghetto. Middle-class children, having lived in a more sheltered and more affluent environment, would have great difficulty in surviving under the difficult conditions of the ghetto. They simply have had no need for and have not developed the necessary coping skills in response to a difficult and hostile environment.

When asked to provide cognitive maps of their communities, there are large and systematic differences in children's perceptions of their environment. Persons who perceive their neighborhoods as dangerous view their homes and communities quite differently from those who live and dwell in settings they consider safe. Rainwater has observed:

> The interior of the home and the neighborhood are viewed as one with regard to the safety so that if the neighborhood is perceived as nonthreatening, then the home can

> seen as a refuge from the world. If the neighborhood is considered dangerous, the home is not likely to be viewed as a sanctuary....The outside of the home is an inevitable extension of the inside and the inside of the home is deeply affected by what goes on outside.[19]

Slum neighborhoods are considered "dangerous" by most of the inhabitants as well as by outsiders and there are data, such as statistics on crime and violence, to support this perception. It is a perception which grows from the environmental forces of the city and which has an impact on the behavior of children and adults alike.

The poor child, especially the non-white poor child, is more likely than his white middle-class peer to be affected by medical and nutritional problems associated with living in substandard housing and not having access to adequate health-care facilities. Ashmore and McConahay point out that "undernutrition, overexposure to illness and accident, and lack of access to decent medical care can affect learning ability by producing neurological damage."[20] Poor nutrition and inadequate medical care affect both the child's physical and mental health.

The family and the neighborhood are the places where the child is brought up to become members of their society and are socialized, encountering other children and adults from whose experiences they learn how to adapt and behave. Among the basic needs of children-- and adults as well, of course-- is the need for privacy. While there are societies which have no word for privacy and indeed think the concept is horrible when it is explained to them, most individuals in modern society have a basic need for "some sort of privacy, some small, identifiable spatial territory of one's own-- even if it is only a hook on which to hang one's own hat."[21]

There are many meanings of privacy. Wolfe and Laufer have identified four concepts of privacy held by children and adolescents: (1) one concept of privacy was that of being alone and uninterrupted; (2) another concept was controlling access to information or being able to have secrets; (3) still another meaning of privacy was that of "no one bothering me"; and (4) finally, there is the concept of controlling access to space. These researchers point out that these various meanings of privacy were not held equally by all children. Children who had no rooms of their own-- poor children and inner-city children-- may not perceive of privacy as a physical separation but rather may develop psychological withdrawal in order to establish one's privacy.[22]

In considering living in slums and inner-cities, the fact of density is quite apparent. However, researchers have pointed out that density involves only spatial limitations.

A related concept involves crowding. Crowding is "an experiential state in which the restrictive and other physical aspects of limited space result in some psycho-physiological reactions by the individual." There are social, personal, and physical dimensions which interact with spatial factors to affect the expression and perception of crowding.[23] Crowding is determined in a relative rather than an absolute context and while it may affect the cognitive, emotional, and physiological states of individuals, the impact is not necessarily negative. As Choi and others point out, crowding is not simply a matter of density of persons in a given space but depends in part on the people who are doing the crowding, the activity going on, and the prior experience the individual has had involving numbers of persons in similar situations. The inner-city child, because he lives in more densely populated settings, is more likely to experience crowding and the effects of crowding than middle-class peers who have very different experiences.

Privacy, anonymity, crowding, multi-sensory stimulation are all aspects of the experiential development of the child in the city which affect their growth and development in very profound ways. There are large and systematic differences in children's perceptions of their environment which are readily apparent when they are asked to provide mental images of their worlds. Maurer and Baxter, for example, studied the nature or quantity of imagery and attitudes for Black, Anglo, and Mexican-American children. The imagery of the Anglo (i.e., white) children of their neighborhood environments was much more complex than that of Black and Chicano children. Black children tended to draw their homes first and to make them very large (ten times that of the Anglos), provided much more detail about their homes, and mentioned their homes as being liked or disliked more. The cognitive maps and mental pictures children provide of their neighborhoods and their cities vary considerably in terms of the locus, restrictions, and likes and dislikes.[24]

Finally, there is a strong relationship between children's manifest anxiety and their perceptions of negative environmental stimuli. There are differences in the degree of manifest anxiety expressed by children of different socioeconomic status, race, and sex which is related to the frequency of negative environmental stimuli perceived by them. The negative environmental stimuli experienced by or perceived by poor children has a strong impact on their manifest anxieties, their general affective development.[25] The growth in the child's belief in control of one's own destiny or lack of fate control is affected by the environmental impact on the individual.

5. Urban Environment and Play.

Play is one of the most important aspects in the development of the child. As Becker has observed: "Through play, children develop the physical skills and coordination, try out different role responsibilities, learn to differentiate themselves from the world around them, and hopefully, begin to view themselves as effective change agents-- capable of controlling as well as being controlled."[26]

Where children play, what they play with, and how they play is affected to a large extent by environmental factors. Play is very different for the middle-class children from that for the children of the poor. It is not that they may not engage in many of the same games and play activities but rather the differences are primarily in where they play, under what circumstances, with whom they play, and who supervises their play. The space in the child's home, the availability of "formal" toys, acceptable playmates, all differ with affluence of the child's family.

For centuries, the streets have been play spaces for children of the city, especially those from low-income families. Street games have been invented and passed on from one generation to another. Some observers have asserted that the hazards of the modern automobile-- its propensity for accidents, its air and noise pollution, its use of parking spaces-- have made the car the true villain of the street game. Others, such as Arnold Arnold, argue that "crowding and lack of space, urbanisation, TV addiction, and an obsession with pumping information into children have robbed many [children] of playfulness and essential play experiences."[27]

Margaret Mead has observed that Puerto Rican parents in New York City are divided into two distinct groups-- those who keep their children upstairs in the apartments and simply will not let them out of the house and those who let their children out of the house, and in effect give them up. Mead points out that there is no middle ground-- they either lock them up or let them go completely and either approach has very different consequences from giving children a limited but clearly defined range for exploration of one's environment.[28]

A longitudinal study in Nottingham (England) by Newsom and Newsom found that as the social scale was descended, housing accomodations were smaller and family sizes larger. The Newsoms found that working-class mothers seemed less able to tolerate their children's indoor play so that the streets became overspill space for play. As the socioeconomic scale is ascended, the Newsoms found that "the child is much more likely to have some place in the house which belongs to him, where he can keep his own things; this immediately means that indoor

play is both more positively encouraged and more inherently attractive for the child durther up the scale."[29]

On the other hand, a study in Birmongham (England) found that almost half the children under age five in a low-income district of that city never went out to play since they had no access to play spaces at the front or back of their houses and the parents simply were afraid for their safety when permitted to play outside.[30]

Environmental psychologist Charles Mercer has advanced a series of seven propositions from the Newsoms study data which he believes are applicable to working-class four-year olds but not to middle-class four-year olds:

(1) The working-class lives in a more crowded environment-- more siblings and less space.
(2) The play of the working-class child must perforce take place in the street or other communa areas and not on home territory.
(3) The working-class child is therefore more likely to come into contact with all sorts and a greater number of children.
(4) The working-class child's choice of friends is not guided by parents, as all children play on communal areas.
(5) For the same reason the play of the working-class child is not supervised by adults.
(6) The working-class parent is reluctant to interfere in children's play because this may lead to conflict with other parents who are also neighbours.
(7) Conflict with neighbours is less easily tolerated in the working-class environment because of the greater propinquity of families and the fact that the working class parents could not help but come into contact with the offended neighbours and meanwhile the children would have made it up anyway.[31]

In addition to providing play space for children, the urban streets provide stimuli which are not only visual but have an impact on all other senses as well-- smell, sound, taste, and touch. As Rodofsky points out in Streets for People, the urban environment provides for considerable learning on the part of the child concerning human nature, social interaction, commercial transactions, and general communications. On the positive or romantic side, the modern city provides the young child with opportunities to explore the world and to undergo a range of experiences simply not available to the rural or suburban child. On the negative or realistic side, the city streets are hazardous to the physical and mental health of the child. The role models the young child sees in the streets of his neighborhood if it is a slum area run the complete gamut from negative to positive. Seeing adolescents and adults

out of work and idle with nowhere to go and nothing constructive to do contributes little to raising the aspirations of the child.

In addition to the streets as play spaces and grow spaces, there are often playgrounds available, sometimes on housing project or council estates and sometimes on a small plot in the neighborhood. Such playgrounds usually provide some type of standardized equipment which is supposed to serve children of different ages and sexes over a period of time. In recent years, playground designers have begun to be more sensitive to what Becker calls "the environmental messages that space and facilities convey to children" whether such messages are intended or not.[32] Barker has observed that:

> certain types of spaces "seduce" or spontaneously and by their own nature elicit certain responses from children. A large, open grassy space is seen by children as highly desirable play space, despite its location in front of city hall. Vertical elements will be climbed on, and dirt dug in, rules and regulations notwithstanding. Rather than labeling what are essentially positive environmental modifications, we need to look at the way in which participants perceive their behavior and the context in which it occurs.[33]

Thus, Becker argues that "it is impossible, and not necessarily desirable, to contain children's play within an area labeled 'playground' by some adult. Children will use and enjoy the best of these areas, but they must be viewed as but one of the many elements, necessary but not sufficient."[34]

Numerous studies have pointed to the very restricted world which children from slum areas live in. Children may live across the street from a park but never venture into it. They may be a short distance from a subway station but never have been on a subway. For many inner-city children, as Lynch has pointed out, the home tends to be the streets but only those streets in a very narrowly defined area. One study of children in Harlem's slums found the majority of school children had never been more than a few blocks away from their homes and their school.

Lois Stalvey has contrasted the slum children of Philadelphia with her own white, middle-class children:

> To my children, the urban environment does indeed mean parks, museums, and historical sites; it means also the respect of their public school teachers and administrators. It is for a small number of children like mine that urban institutions seem to be created and operated.
>
> . . . . .
>
> To George [a child from a Philadelphia ghetto] nature consists of the rats and cockroaches his family fights constantly. George does not go to city parks; his older

brother was killed in one by a rival gang.

. . . . .

And so George does not go out often, certainly not to hear music groups at Philadelphia's Spectrum. There are many places George cannot go if they are on the "turf" of a gang not of his own neighborhood....George has little choice but to stay in the house and watch television. George cannot read.[35]

6. *Urban Schools and the City Children.*

Much has been written about schools and schooling of urban areas. Children from inner city areas seem severely hampered in their schooling by a complex of conditions at home, in the neighborhood, and in the classroom. Some time ago, I wrote that to understand the various distinct, interrelated levels of involvement and social organization which affect the development of the child, it would be well to view the young learner at the center of a series of concentric forces which directly influence growth and development:

The child, with his genetic potential; his experiential background; his stage of intellectual, emotional, and personality development; his attitudes and values; his self-image and view of himself in relationship to others.

The family of the child, as well as other immediate primary (peer groups); ethnic and racial group characteristics; newcomer or old-resident; socioeconomic and educational level; family stability, including the absence or presence of positive male models or matriarchy; extent of acculturation to urban setting.

The neighborhood in which the child and his family live; its religious, social, political, and economic characteristics; the nature of housing available; the relationships with other neighborhoods, in the city; the sense of social health.

The school and the classroom which the child attends; student population, staff, program; the resources available in implementing the program; teacher characteristics and expectations; curriculum goals; the school climate.

Other agencies and institutions active in the neighborhood and the larger urban setting, such as community centers; welfare agencies, health and medical facilities, public and private; personnel, programs, organizational characteristics; working relationships among institutions and agencies; power and decision-making forces.

City and larger metropolitan area-- social, economic, and political characteristics; relationships among various units and divisions within the area; relationships with surrounding areas; effectiveness in solving problems.

Larger regional, national, and international setting-- social, political, economic characteristics; relation of its philosophy to local educational goals and budgets.

These various "levels" are very much interrelated and mutually limiting. For example, classroom modifications by one teacher may have relatively little impact unless supported by the climate of the school, the neighborhood, and the family. Thus, the environmental impact is at many different levels and affects the child both positively and negatively in a variety of ways.[36]

Schools in inner-cities tend to be larger. more impersonal, and more bureaucratic than rural and suburban schools. Pupil population density is high both in the classrooms and in the school and its environs. The buildings are more often over-aged and inadequate. Frequently, the school buildings are as substandard as the housing from which the children come. Curriculum and instructional resources may be inappropriate and inadequate. Teaching staffs frequently represent socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups quite different from those of the pupils. The pupil populations are often socioeconomically, racially, and ethnically segregated. In designating certain schools and areas as "Educational Priority Areas," England's Plowden Committee urged identifying children in districts where "educational handicaps are reinforced by social handicaps." The criteria applied in designating the EPA's underscored the notion that environmental forces in the family and the neighborhood interacted with environmental forces in the school in creating conditions which contributed to inadequate cognitive and affective growth and development of the inner-city child.[37]

Many efforts in what is now called compensatory education are aimed at creating conditions which will help disadvantaged children overcome those factors which contribute to their poor performance in schools and their being at a disadvantage with respect to educational opportunities available. Miller and Roby suggest that the various strategies currently employed to improve educational performance of poor and minority group children can be subsumed in five categories: (1) changing the student and his family-- aiming at compensatory socialization of low-income family life; (2) changing the school-- its staff, curriculum, materials, organization and services rather than the learner and his family; (3) increasing resources and changing their distribution-- raising educational expenditure and making distribution more equitable; (4)changing the student composition-- providing for greater socioeconomic and racial/ethnic balance; and (5) changing the control of the schools-- providing for greater community involvement in decision-making concerning school programs and processes.[38]

The environmental impact on inner-city children has resulted in their acquiring cognitive and affective styles which represent both strengths and weaknesses. These styles are often quite different from those of their more advantaged peers and it has been argued that schools must capitalize on these strengths by adapting educational programs and provisions. Compensatory education is not only remedial but must be developmental as well.

The city, as has been pointed out, "is actually an ecosystem, a community of physical and biological entities interacting with each other and with the total environment. Education that deals with the urban environment should help learners understand the city as such a totality."[39] It is this notion which has prompted educational planners to think of the city as school, so that all of the educating resources of the city will be used to develop the potential of the urban child. Urban children should be provided experiences in many kinds of environments so that they come to know the worlds beyond their immediate restricted neighborhoods. Urban education should provide for intensive study of the effects of the city on the social and natural environments and provide insights into understanding the city as a totality.

7. In Conclusion.

The basic argument has been that the urban environment has many diverse characteristics and dimensions which impact on children in the city both positively and negatively. The nature of and the extent of impact is determined by a variety of factors so that individuals experience the city quite differently from one another.

Cities represent vast and rich cultural, educational, social, economic, physical, and natural resources which influence the development of the young. However, access to such resources differs with various populations. How such resources are perceived and used differs. Ward has argued that "we have to explore every way of making the city more accessible, more negotiable, and more useful to the child" so that children will "develop the habit of exploiting everything their environment can provide."[40]

Rene DuBois's observation is to the point:

> By acting on the child during his formative stages, the environment thus shapes him physically and mentally, thereby influencing what he will become and how he will function as an adult. For this reason, environmental planning plays a key role in enabling human beings to actualize their potentialities.[41]

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